



## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLANNING: ADDRESSING THE FOUR ELEMENTS

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Open Space and Resource Protection, Housing, Economic Development and Transportation

The economic prosperity of Massachusetts depends upon growth decisions made in every community. Communities must provide diverse housing and economic opportunities for residents, while considering the impacts on transportation and finite natural resources such as water, open space, and habitat.

When considering expansion of its commercial or industrial sectors, a community must consider the housing needed for the associated labor force. When thinking about housing needs, a community must think about the best type, quantity and location of housing in relationship to the protection of natural resources and the proximity to transportation. In assessing options for open space protection, a community must think about its effect on future residential development and quality of life. All of the elements are interrelated, and these relationships must be examined when preparing a CD Plan.

Conducting the Assets and Liabilities Inventory and a Community Visioning process as described in Chapter C is an important precursor to addressing the four core elements of a CD Plan. While addressing the four core elements, outlined in this Chapter, the community or group of communities should refer back to its Inventory and Vision Statement frequently to be sure that the final plan complements its assets and addresses their liabilities.

The CD Plan program recognizes that communities are at various stages of the planning process. Some communities have recently completed comprehensive planning documents, while others are just beginning a similar process. This chapter outlines the minimum steps communities must take in order to complete the four core elements of the CD Plan. The CD Plan is not designed to be as comprehensive as a master plan, or to address any of the elements in depth. Rather it is designed to provide a snapshot, which can help communities determine how the four core elements relate to one another. By completing these minimum steps, the community or group of communities should be able to make specific recommendations for changes, as well as to identify areas where further work is needed before decisions can be made.

Chapter D "Creating a Scope of Services" describes the requirement for a community to obtain acceptance for use of an existing plan or component, in place of one or more of the required elements of the CD Plan.

## THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN: OPEN SPACE AND RESOURCE PROTECTION

Consideration of environmental resources, especially those areas critical to sustaining current and future local and regional water supplies, is essential to developing an effective Community Development Plan. Communities need to know where open space protection and/or sensitive development is important to protect critical habitat, create greenways and scenic landscapes, promote quality of life, and provide recreational opportunities for the Commonwealth's citizens and visitors. Communities also need to understand where new development, such as additional housing units, can be provided with minimal detrimental effect upon these natural resources.

The open space and resource protection element of this guidebook outlines a step-by-step process, resulting in concrete products that will aid communities in achieving a basic understanding of their environmental resources and help them to consider the environmental impacts of alternative development patterns. For example, one product of the following process is a Land Use Suitability Map, which is intended to provide those preparing CD Plans with an understanding of the types and locations of natural resources. This knowledge will aid informed decision-making: as communities determine the type, quantity, and location of additional housing, economic development, and transportation opportunities to be provided, these decisions can be made cognizant of the natural resources present.

This section of the guidebook outlines the minimum steps a community or a group of communities need to take to complete the open space and resource protection element of a CD Plan. It is important to realize that none of these analyses provides a complete understanding of the environmental resources present or identifies all of the effects of different types of development upon those resources. Rather, this process, like those outlined in the other sections of this Chapter, will help communities achieve a basic understanding of the issue being considered and may suggest avenues for additional planning.

### The Product: The Open Space and Resource Protection Element of a CD Plan

Completion of the open space and resource protection element of a Community Development Plan involves the steps that follow and results in:

- A GIS-based Land Use Suitability Map(s) which delineates areas that are:
- Most suited for additional housing, commercial, retail, industrial, transportation, or other development; and
- Priorities for protection or sensitive development for habitat preservation, protection of water resources, provision of recreational opportunities, preservation of vistas, conservation of landscapes that are elements of a community's character, or other purpose.



**Tip:** While a GIS map is required for the final CD Plan, it is recommended that GIS be utilized throughout the planning process for all four core elements. GIS is a particularly valuable tool for the creation of resource maps and the completion of the overlay analyses described below for the open space and resource protection element. GIS consultants can complete these analyses for communities that are interested in this use of GIS.



**Tip:** Addressing housing, transportation, and economic development needs should be done with an understanding of open space and natural resource implications. A community may wish to complete the open space and resource protection section of a CD plan first so that the results from the environmental analysis can be incorporated into subsequent decisions on housing and economic development.

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**Tip:**

*Communities are encouraged to complete the open space and resource protection section of their CD Plan together. This will promote interlocal cooperation, address the difference between natural resource and political boundaries, and (through economies of scale) enable consultants to achieve more than would be possible if CD Plans were individually developed.*



**Tip:**

*For those communities that do not have an Open Space Plan, a CD Plan can be expanded to meet the more detailed Open Space Planning requirements of the Division of Conservation Services (Note: This will require funding beyond that available to accomplish the minimum elements of a CD Plan.)*



**Tip:**

*This inventory of environmental resources should focus on identifying where resources exist, rather than on other factors such as zoning. The objective is to determine what locations would make the most sense for future growth based on natural resource factors. The final step in the CD Plan process will then compare the open space and resource protection analysis with other elements of a CD Plan, current zoning, and other factors to achieve a balanced plan for future development.*

- An analysis of ability to meet future water and wastewater needs while protecting natural water resources. This should be accomplished through the completion of a water budget analysis addressing alternative development scenarios.
- A water quality analysis which addresses the non-point source pollution loading and water quality impacts of alternative development scenarios.
- A detailed description of the findings and recommendations resulting from the completion of the Open Space and Resource Protection element of the CD Plan.

*See Chapter A for more community-specific data and other sources of information.*

## STEP 1: Location and Mapping of Natural Resources

The first step to completing the open space and resource protection element section of a CD Plan is to locate and map important environmental resources. All communities will be expected to complete a Land Use Suitability Map(s) based, at a minimum, upon readily available GIS information.

### Natural Resources to be Mapped

Much of the information below is available from the MassGIS Program and should be included when completing the Land Use Suitability Map(s) described in Step 3 below. However, to the extent that communities have more detailed local information, this should be used in addition to, or instead of, the MassGIS information (submission of this information to MassGIS for inclusion in statewide datasets would be appreciated). This is important as many communities will have information that for little extra effort they can add to the analysis that had been collected under previous studies (e.g. aquifer protection zones, wastewater or water plans, other overlay zones, etc.). Local data increases the value of CD Plans by accurately reflecting local conditions. Note that some kinds of information are available only in limited areas. Contact your planning consultant, GIS consultant and/or MassGIS for further information and assistance in determining the best available information for this analysis.

Communities should map and evaluate the following resources and any others that are relevant:

### Water Resources

- Lakes, ponds, and other surface water bodies.
- Rivers, streams, and their associated riparian corridors.
- Wetlands and wetland buffer areas.
- Areas of significance for groundwater recharge (based on best available surficial geology).
- Water supply watershed areas.
- Current public water supplies and areas of contribution.
- Other large withdrawals from ground or surface waters.
- Significant points of discharge (i.e. significant industrial user, wastewater treatment plant).

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- Sanitary sewer, storm water, and water supply infrastructure.
- Flood hazard areas (FEMA Flood Insurance Maps).

### Habitat

- Critical habitat areas including habitat of rare, threatened, and endangered species.
- Areas of significance for biodiversity.
- Natural communities, particularly significant or unusual natural communities.
- Linkages between riparian corridors, wetlands, and upland habitat.

### Land Use

- The most recent land use information.
- Existing and potential greenways or trail corridors (protected lands).
- Existing protected open space (permanently protected and other such as Chapter 61 lands).
- Landscapes or land uses of historic, scenic, or local “sense of place” significance.
- Working landscapes such as lands currently used for or with the potential for agricultural or silvicultural use.
- Large areas of undeveloped land, particularly those in single ownership.
- Areas of Critical Environmental Concern.
- Mapped information resulting from the Assets and Liabilities Inventory.
- Soils.
- Topography.

As noted above, communities should use readily available information, and are encouraged to create other map themes based on local information and information from other state agencies.

### STEP 2: Suitability

Once the mapping needed for each of the three themes (Water Resources, Habitat, and Land Use) has been completed, the community or group of communities should indicate on each of the maps lands that are most suited for development and lands that are most desirable to either protect from development or develop in a manner that recognizes resource protection concerns. Communities should weight resources for protection as appropriate based on the type of resource and the priorities of the community as expressed in their Vision Statement.

### STEP 3: Draft a Land Use Suitability Map

Once the community or group of communities has evaluated land use suitability for all of the resource areas listed above, it will be necessary to overlay the resource maps and develop an overall Land Use Suitability Map. If particular areas of the community are given a similar priority in more than one layer of the overlay, the community may want to pay particular attention to these areas. The data layer overlay conducted



**Tip:** For participants using GIS, the MassGIS Program has developed a standard GIS format that communities and service providers will need to use. Known as the GIS DataViewer, the product, will both package the existing information described above and make the result of community planning efforts compatible with other communities in the region and statewide. MassGIS will be providing both the documentation and software for the DataViewer and standard GIS format specifications to communities and their consultants as their planning process gets underway.



**Tip:** Communities may choose to use a CD Plan consultant to expand upon this list to achieve a more comprehensive list of resources for examination. Communities may also have their own more detailed or better quality mapping than what is readily available in GIS form. When better information is available it should be used. Local plans that are not presently in a GIS format can be converted to GIS by a GIS consultant.



**Tip:** Participants should note that this is one suggested way of handling the information to be analyzed. Communities can use the three theme maps, or some other means of evaluating and prioritizing environmental resources that results in the production of an overall Land Use Suitability Map.





**Tip:**

*As with the other elements of a CD Plan the resource theme maps, the overall Land Use Suitability Map(s), and the water resource analyses to follow should be developed and shared through a public process involving a diversity of stakeholders. See Chapter C “Creating a Community Vision” for a list of stakeholders.*

here will identify those lands that are the most environmentally fragile and thus desirable to protect, and those areas that are most suited for new development.

Areas that are prioritized for development in all of the layers should be highlighted in order to present an overall picture of which areas of the community, strictly from an environmental resources perspective, are most appropriate for additional growth. In addition to or instead of using previously undeveloped land, these areas should include areas where existing development already occurs, brownfields where previously utilized areas can be redeveloped, and areas already served by infrastructure. Similarly, areas that are least appropriate for growth based upon the overlay analysis should be examined and land protection priorities indicated on the Land Use Suitability Map(s). It is important to note that the type of development that takes place should reflect the resources present. Not all land with sensitive resources can or should be permanently protected. Development on lands with such resources should be sensitive to the resources present.

## **STEP 4: Compare the Land Use Suitability Map with Current and Future Land Use**

This step is an overlay analysis that places the Land Use Suitability Map resulting from Step 3 onto the Developable Lands Map from the Buildout Analysis. By comparing these maps, the community can determine the extent to which future growth patterns, based on existing zoning, are consistent with the identified priorities for land development and protection. A second overlay analysis in this step involves overlaying the most current land use map for the community onto the Land Use Suitability Map.

These two overlay analyses should provide useful information to the community regarding areas of trade-offs between resources and current and future development. By looking at the community's current zoning in the undeveloped areas, the community can determine if existing zoning supports the best use of a particular site. For example, if an undeveloped area near an aquifer is currently zoned for intensive industrial use, the community may consider changing the zoning to a less intensive use and/or identify the area or a portion of the area to acquire for water supply protection.

This step also provides an opportunity to identify the best places to site new development. Beyond reuse of brownfields and other existing developed sites, communities should look at these areas as the best areas to place new housing and commercial or industrial growth pursuant to the other elements of the CD Plan process.

**STEP 5: Community Development Planning and Water Resources**

Protecting water resources is a key part of a CD Plan that ensures the long-term environmental and economic health of a community or group of communities. Communities should incorporate six key concepts in the planning efforts:

- Use water efficiently.
- Keep water near its point of withdrawal.
- Protect current and future water supplies.
- Protect natural water resource areas.
- Develop a single plan for meeting water, wastewater and stormwater needs.
- Use appropriate treatment for water, wastewater, and non-point source pollution, emphasizing pollution prevention as the best alternative.

As part of the water resources component of the open space and resource protection element of a Community Development Plan, participants are expected to:

- Use available GIS information to map current and potential future water supplies and determine whether existing zoning and overlay protection areas are adequate to protect the critical water resources in the community (completed in Steps One – Four above).
- Estimate, by completing a water budget, whether the community's water and wastewater needs can be met in a manner that is sustainable to local water resources.
- Provide an overview of the water quality issues that currently exist and that might be expected from future development or build-out scenarios.

In order to complete these tasks, communities should gather existing wastewater plans, water supply plans, and stormwater plans to determine the overall picture of how current and planned infrastructure will affect the local water resources and meet future needs. The community data profile, included in this guidebook, provides basic information on water and sewer issues, but more specific data may be obtained directly from the local or regional entities responsible for these services. Communities with no municipal infrastructure for water, sewer, or storm water should concentrate on the overlay analysis that highlights where existing and future development may affect water resources such as rivers, streams, wetlands, aquifers, or other elements. For more detailed guidance regarding these required elements of the open space and resource protection section of a Community Development Plan visit EOE's website at [www.state.ma.us/envir](http://www.state.ma.us/envir).

Completing these analyses of the water resource impacts of alternative land use patterns can help communities answer basic questions about the resultant water resource impacts of alternative



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**Tip:**

*Communities engaged in preparing CD Plans should be aware that the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is in the process of drafting revised Comprehensive Water Resources Management Planning guidance to assist communities with the analysis of their water resources. When this revised document becomes available, it will provide the community with a set of goals and expectations for water resources planning.*

types and locations for new development. The result of the CD planning effort could be a:

- Realization of the present status of environmental planning within the community and a subsequent decision to engage in more detailed planning to meet long-term water and wastewater needs.
- Recognition that more study may be needed in order to fully understand an often complex water supply or environmental issue.
- List of specific changes to zoning to enhance local protection measures such as:
  - Aquifer protection overlay districts that restrict certain uses or amounts of impervious surfaces.
  - Establishment of watershed protection districts to protect sensitive water resources and water supplies.

### STEP 6: Summarizing and Utilizing Your Environmental Analysis

Develop a written summary of the process of developing the open space and resource element of your CD Plan including:

- A list of specific data gaps.
- A summary of the outcome.
- A list of specific actions recommended to be taken by the community.
- The anticipated use of the open space and resource protection element of your CD Plan.

This summary will assist communities in using the findings and recommendations of their open space and resource protection element to balance resource protection with needed housing, economic development, and transportation infrastructure.

## THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN: HOUSING

As the number of households, in the Commonwealth grows, communities across the state will face the challenge of increased housing needs. In addressing the housing element of a CD Plan, local officials and residents will examine housing market conditions in the community and region. Like the other core elements of the CD Plan, the housing element is designed to provide communities with a base level of information, upon which future planning decisions can be made. This process presents an opportunity to determine proactively how increasing the supply of housing can meet the needs of current and future residents in a way that preserves both quality of life and sense of place.

A key objective of the Cellucci-Swift Administration is to encourage communities to increase the supply of housing across a broad range of incomes and age brackets. The housing component of the CD Plan is a tool to assist communities in:

- Identifying zoning and land use options that provide a range of housing opportunities.
- Making future decisions regarding land use and housing development alternatives.
- Building a constituency for implementation of the CD Plan by educating residents about housing needs, opportunities, conflicts, and constraints.
- Encouraging creative thinking regarding appropriateness and desirability of different patterns of land use, identifying alternative housing types that might better serve the needs of all residents, including the elderly and disabled, as well as various types and sizes of households.

### Developing the Housing Component of the CD Plan

When developing the housing component, the community begins by collecting and analyzing readily available data related to the current supply and anticipated future demand for housing. Local officials and residents work together to set goals and objectives for meeting the identified housing needs, addressing the location, quantity, and type of additional housing opportunities to be provided in the community.

### **The Product: Housing Element of a CD Plan**

- Housing Inventory Map(s) and accompanying Report
- Assessment of Housing Demand
- A Housing Needs Report
- A Housing Goals and Objectives Statement
- A Preliminary Future Housing Map and accompanying Goals and Objectives Report



*Those communities that have completed an existing current housing plan or strategy, such as a housing needs study, housing component of a master plan, or a consolidated plan required by the federal Housing and Urban Development Agency (HUD), may submit it in place of part or all of the entire housing element of a CD Plan if it meets the criteria described in Chapter D and includes the information which would be produced though this element. If accepted, the mappable portions of the plan must be translated to a GIS format.*





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## STEP 1: Gather Information and Complete a Housing Supply Inventory

The first step in completing the housing section of the CD Plan is to gain an understanding of the present housing stock and recent growth trends. Communities should utilize the best available information to map and analyze housing data. This may include assessors' records, GIS geocoding, digital tax maps, and utility company databases made available to the community.

These questions may help to generate other information that will be useful in the planning process:

- Is there a waiting list for public housing (elderly and family)?
- What first-time homebuyer programs are available in your community and in the region?
- Does your community or region participate in the "Soft Second Loan Program" that provides assistance to first time homebuyers through the banking community?
- What is the extent of the homelessness problem in your community? In the region?
- Does your community have a current/recent Fair Housing Plan?
- What is the percentage of subsidized housing in the community?
- Does the community meet the MGL Chapter 40B goal of 10% subsidized housing?
- Has your community prepared the checklist for housing certification described in Executive Order 418, which was distributed by DHCD to the chief executive in each city and town? Whether or not the community has completed the certification process, examine the form for the list of proactive actions that could improve housing opportunity in the community.

### Additional sources of information

*There are numerous departments, boards, commissions and organizations that can provide information and advice on the issue of housing supply and affordability.*

*A list of information providers is included in Chapter A.*

*Use maps, graphics, and text to illustrate:*

- The existing housing stock and densities if not already provided on the buildout maps.
- Current housing costs.
- Recent growth trends including number and types of subdivisions (See buildout analysis for recent subdivisions).
- Regional housing information (inventory, sales, sub-markets, etc).

*See Chapter A for more community-specific data and other sources of information.*

*Use text and graphics, and maps if applicable, to discuss or describe:*

- Numbers and types of units, costs, condition, rental vs. owner occupancy, and age.
- Areas where the housing stock meets or does not meet health and sanitation, safety, public services, and energy efficiency standards. If there are general areas where the most important housing-related strategy is to address substandard housing conditions or energy needs through rehabilitation or renovation, the area may be shown on a map accompanying the report.
- The extent of vacant and abandoned housing properties.
- The number and type of subsidized units in the community.

Note: Entities other than housing authorities may provide subsidized housing, e.g., CDCs, MHFA financed properties, community based non-profit agencies, etc.

- Vacancy rates.
- Length of vacancy for rental and owner occupied.
- Percent of units on the market over time.
- Housing factors that are unique to the community (e.g., elder homeowners, need for seasonal housing for workers in tourist-based businesses, substandard housing stock, limited supply of housing stock).
- Housing authority capacity (number and types of units), vacancy rate, and waiting list.

## STEP 2: Complete an Assessment of Housing Demand

The assessment should include both relevant statistics and a narrative analysis regarding characteristics of the occupants or consumers of housing in the community and region. Provide a narrative and graphic assessment of current and future housing demand considering:

- Household size.
- Current and projected population through 2008 (see data profile).
- Number and type of households.
- Age composition and distribution.
- Income:
  - Poverty-level income households.
  - Low income households (up to 50 percent of area median).
  - Moderate income households (51 to 80 percent of area median).
  - Middle income households (81 to 150 percent of area median).
  - Upper income households.
  - First time homebuyer income.

In addition, examine measures of housing demand including:

- The community's level of subsidized housing included in the M.G.L. Chapter 40B inventory.  
<http://www.state.ma.us/dhcd/components/hac/subhous.htm>
- The affordability gap between the community-wide median income, incomes of people needing housing, and the income required to purchase and/or rent homes in the community. Determine what each income group in the community can afford to pay for housing and determine what income levels can presently afford to live in the community.
- The number of households on waiting lists for local or regional housing authority subsidized units and whether the number increased/decreased in recent years; also the housing authority's estimate of need in the next 10 years.
- Housing need as expressed by local and regional businesses based on projected expansion plans.
- Gaps in the continuum of housing (low-cost rental, first-time homebuyer, market rate, assisted living, etc.)



*Examine current zoning and land-use regulations to determine what is likely to be built. For example, zoning may permit a single family home on a half-acre lot. Estimate the likely size, cost, etc. of units constructed within each zoning district. Consider national, regional, and local social and economic conditions and how they may impact the estimates over time.*

*Unmet housing needs will vary from community to community and region to region. For example, in some communities housing units suitable for the elderly may be the most pressing need, in others rental units or home ownership units for large families might be the most important gap.*

*A number of communities have tried to foster the development of village centers with a mixture of land uses, including housing, in areas where infrastructure and other public services are available. This has resulted in village zoning districts and other options to provide additional housing opportunity.*

*See the "Sample Strategies" and "Additional Resources" and Tools" Chapters of this guidebook and discuss with your consultant(s) possible use/adaptation of zoning bylaws/ordinances or other techniques or types of housing that are relevant to this task.*

*As the community identifies different types of housing units and patterns for future development, it needs to consider location, infrastructure, environmental resources, availability of transportation, and other factors. This is best accomplished through close coordination among the different elements of the CD Plan.*

## STEP 3: Quantify Need by Comparing Supply and Demand

Step 3 provides the community with an understanding of present and future housing needs, including the number and types of units needed, an estimate of units that are likely to be constructed under present land use regulations and housing construction trends, and a summary of the units that are needed but are not likely to be developed without some changes in the parameters for new housing development. Use the information gathered in the buildout analysis, the data section, the housing inventory, and the demand assessment to identify unmet housing needs (i.e. "gaps" between supply and demand) within the community at all stages of the housing continuum.

The result of the comparison will be a housing needs report that lists the types and quantities of units not currently provided and those that are needed to meet future housing demand. A good analysis takes into account the community goals and objectives developed during the Visioning process, balanced against the common need, on a regional basis, to provide for housing for the Commonwealth's citizens.

## STEP 4: Addressing Needs by Setting Goals and Objectives

In Step 4, local officials and others participating in the process will develop goals and objectives to address the gaps. The outcome will be a Housing Goals and Objectives Statement. The Statement represents a consensus of opinion regarding housing issues based on the results of the public process eliciting the views of community leaders, local stakeholders, and officials. Examine the statement for consistency with the community's overall Vision Statement and highlight the creation of housing affordable to households over a broad range of incomes. Also describe how the community will provide additional housing that responds to the particular needs identified.

The Statement should answer questions regarding the provision of additional housing in the community such as where, when, what type, and for whom housing should be built. The plan will be more effective and useful if it includes specific goals, such as particular types or costs of units that are needed, in addition to the identifying overall supply of housing being provided. For example, in order to close an affordability gap identified in Step 3, a community might determine that it needs 100 units of moderate income housing over the next five years.

## STEP 5: Draft a Preliminary Future Housing Map

The task of Step 5 is to utilize the Goals and Objectives Statement to address the CD Plan requirements regarding location, type, and quantity of additional housing to be provided. In short, the community needs to show on a map how many units of housing it is seeking to provide, of what type and in what locations.

To provide an alternative mix of housing types, the community may wish to consider alternative types and/or mixes of units, such as accessory apartments, condominiums, assisted living facilities, or duplexes. Note that although existing zoning may allow the types of units needed by the community, other factors may be precluding their development. In such an event, the implementation section below may be used to address this concern.

### STEP 6: Identifying Additional Housing Opportunities

The final task of the housing element of a CD Plan is to determine preliminary locations for new housing that are most appropriate for each type of housing to be provided. In locating housing, communities should consider many factors, including:

- Transportation infrastructure: road, rail, bus, bike and pedestrian access, capacity of and connection to existing networks, and other factors. Water infrastructure: Available water and sewer service, water source protection, etc.
- Environmental resources (As mapped in Step 4 of the open space and resource protection section of this chapter).
- Employment opportunities.
- Service availability: retail, professional, financial, etc.
- Potential for in-fill housing.
- Neighborhood characteristics.
- Consistency with the vision established earlier in the planning process.
- Existing housing plans.



*The map resulting from this exercise will be preliminary. Each of the elements of a CD Plan will be compared for consistency in the final part of the CD Plan process. As part of the process of crafting the final CD Plan Map, adjustments to each of the individual elements (Housing, Transportation, etc.) may be necessary to achieve a coherent and consistent Plan that addresses all four elements.*





**Tip:**

*Involve business stakeholders -- such as the Chamber of Commerce and/or other civic groups with a business orientation -- as early as possible. They can provide key information as you develop your plan, and they often have economic development expertise within their organizations. If your community already has an economic development officer, he or she can work closely with these groups. In smaller communities or those without a designated economic development staff, a coalition of local business development groups is often guiding economic development.*

*See Chapter A for more community-specific data and other sources of information.*

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### THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic development helps sustain the quality of life in our communities by ensuring prosperity and jobs for residents. As our cities and towns become even more integrated into the national and international economies, a planned approach for future economic development helps to ensure the long-term viability of our local economies. Moreover, economic growth is increasingly interrelated with housing, transportation, and open space and resource protection.

The economic development section of a Community Development Plan should identify the location, quantity, and type of future commercial and economic development. By creating a profile of the community's current and potential economic status, using buildout and growth suitability maps, residents can determine needs and resources, establish economic goals, and develop strategies for implementation. These goals can then become the basis for a future community economic development strategy.

#### **The Product: Economic Development Element of a CD Plan**

- Current and future economic profile
- Economic development goals statement
- Implementation strategy and accompanying map

### STEP 1: Develop an Economic Statistical Profile

Step 1 of economic development planning requires a statistical profile of the community to aid residents in understanding its current and future economic assets and constraints. Almost all of this information is readily available from government and local business development sources.

**A current economic profile** includes relevant statistics and a narrative analysis. The minimum requirements include:

- Location and number of businesses, employers, and employees in the community. Types of businesses should be classified by industry, using SIC code (Standard Industrial Classification) or NAIC (North American Industry Classification).
- Recent growth trends.
- Workforce development programs serving the community, and their compatibility with business employment needs in the community/region.
- Current and projected job growth, including work force characteristics, age composition, distribution, average wage, and commute routes.

The current profile could also address:

- Current characteristics of the labor force, including: education, skill levels, and training needs.
- Changes in the work force due to diversification, technology, and communications.

- Possible brownfield sites and vacant industrial and commercial space.
- Factors that are unique to the community (reliance on seasonal businesses, position as regional shopping center, high traffic generation as a result of industrial park locations, scarcity of employment for certain age and income groups).

A **future economic profile** includes relevant statistics and a narrative analysis describing the community's economic development potential. This profile can help residents in determining economic goals by outlining the constraints and possibilities of the local economy, including:

- Availability of land/buildings for economic development (acreage and location of new development areas are provided with the buildout maps analysis).
- Predicted workforce and job availability, identifying any gap between employment demands and supply.
- Availability of needed services (based on infrastructure plans and priorities).
- Compatibility of proposed economic development with adjacent land uses and resource protection concerns.
- Availability of housing in the community/region for present and expected workforce (considering expected income of the workforce).
- Needs of local and regional businesses based on projected expansion plans or plans to move from the town/region.
- Revenue generation and service demands (e.g., water supply, sewer capacity, other resource protection considerations, infrastructure, road network, public transit planning, etc) attributable to predicted future economic development.
- Compatibility of economic development opportunities and preferences with neighboring towns and the region.

## STEP 2: Establish Economic Development Goals

Using the statistical profile of the community (or group of communities) created in Step 1, the community can begin the step of evaluating economic development goals. Communities should conduct public, consensus-oriented meetings to establish objectives. The community may wish to self-facilitate, or it may wish to utilize the services of a consultant.

Examples of potential economic goals include:

- Provide economic development that is compatible with the community's aims.
- Ensure that business location proposals consider housing needs, transportation options and constraints, environmental and open space needs, and protection of water supply.
- Foster economic development in areas close to transportation and services.
- Plan for a variety of economic development options: avoid over-reliance on office or industrial parks, assure place for



## COMMUNITY PLANNING PROFILE

### *The Challenge:*

*Two ways to reuse an old schoolhouse:*

### *Solution #1:*

*Affordable housing*

*Corcoran House Associates, L. P. worked with the town of Clinton to turn the abandoned Corcoran School building into a 42-unit assisted living facility for the area's frail elderly. The state supported the project with a \$450,000 grant and low-income housing tax credits. The town gave the developer a \$100,000 loan and tax increment financing (TIF).*

*The conversion saved a historically significant building that had been neglected and deteriorating for several decades. It created attractive and affordable housing for the elderly. Situated in Clinton's central business district and adjacent to the town common, Corcoran House has quickly become an established fixture of the community.*





## COMMUNITY PLANNING PROFILE

### **Solution #2:**

#### ***A museum***

*The National Plastics Center and Museum in Leominster is housed in a converted schoolhouse, built in the 1880s. The town decided to sell the abandoned building to the National Plastics Center and Museum Corporation for \$1.*

*This sale preserved an historic structure, promoted the reuse of an existing building, and created a cultural institution celebrating the industry that earned Leominster the name of "The Plastic City."*



small businesses, and provide small retail operations responsive to the needs of the neighborhood/community/commuters.

- Allow home-based businesses, so long as there is consideration of concerns for traffic generation, parking, hours of operation, etc.
- Provide incentives for live-work units or artisan studios.
- Encourage redevelopment of vacant industrial buildings into incubator space for small and micro-business, as well as residential units.

### **STEP 3: Assess Economic Development Objectives in relationship to Growth Suitability Maps**

After a community has reached a set of policy statements reflecting its goals, it should assess those goals in light of mapped information provided to the municipality. This mapped information includes the buildout maps supplied by EOEa -- in particular, Map 1 (See Chapter A) of the buildout series, which illustrates areas for possible redevelopment, and Map 2 which illustrates buildable land by zoning category. Using this map, residents can identify target areas for various types of economic development based on zoning.

Another essential map to consider in locating new development is the Growth Suitability map generated in the steps outlined in the open space and resource protection section of this chapter.

### **Step 4 – Identify and Evaluate Alternative Economic Development Strategies**

A variety of strategies, including state and/or federal funding programs and/or local regulatory and non-regulatory solutions, are available to the community. Examples are described in Appendix BB "Sample Strategies". The consultant may recommend strategies which similar communities have used to respond to their growth management and economic development goals and objectives.

Because of the complexity of economic development issues, communities consider both regulatory and non-regulatory strategies. Regulatory strategies will be based on zoning and other local by-laws. Non-regulatory options will include assistance to businesses, business organizations, and workforce development providers, support and promotion of appropriate economic development, and use of creative financing programs and incentives.

Examples of potential implementation strategies include:

- Zoning changes which allow at-home businesses, conversion of industrial space to commercial use, or live/work units.
- Establishment of a local economic development entity, such as an Economic Development Industrial Corporation (EDIC), community development corporation, redevelopment authority, or authority charged with the redevelopment of a specific site.

- Streamlining of the local permitting process for developers, while protecting the interests of the community and its residents.
- Creation of a community outreach program to educate the public about what economic development is, what are the economic development and workforce needs of the area, why economic development is a good idea for the community, and how it can fit into the unique environment of the town. The program can include discussions in the local newspaper, community cable television, and meetings of business organizations and other civic groups.

### Step 5 - Establish an Economic Development Implementation Strategy and Location Map

Having completed the previous steps including the Evaluation of Alternative Economic Development Strategies, a community can finalize its economic development strategy. This step involves the consolidation of previous considerations into one narrative statement and accompanying map that outlines the strategy of the community to achieve its economic development goals which includes:

- Economic profiles.
- Economic development goals.
- Implementation strategies in a narrative format with accompanying maps.







# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLANNING: ADDRESSING THE FOUR ELEMENTS

F-17

Open Space and Resource Protection, Housing, Economic Development and Transportation

## THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN: TRANSPORTATION

Unlike the other elements of a Community Development Plan (CD Plan), the transportation element must be completed on a regional or subregional basis. Federal requirements of the transportation funding available for the CD Plan generally require a minimum of three communities working together. The Massachusetts Highway Department will contract with the Regional Planning Agencies to conduct the transportation element.

### The Product: Transportation Element of a CD Plan

- A GIS map of the regional or subregional area that identifies transportation improvements that can be implemented within one to five years.

## Overview of Transportation Planning

Transportation issues are not confined to city or town boundaries. How people and goods move from one place to another is a fundamental issue that needs to be addressed when planning for future growth. Communities planning to create new housing, attract new commercial and industrial development or expand existing businesses need to plan for appropriate transportation infrastructure and services. In addition, the study of transportation needs must consider environmental impacts.

While transportation concerns affect communities on a local level, local traffic impacts are often the consequence of the regional traffic or transit issues. For example, a poorly designed intersection near an industrial park that results in strained traffic capacity usually affects not only the community where the intersection is located, but also other facilities in nearby communities. In addition, if a community is anticipating additional residential or economic development, which would result in increased traffic near or on a currently congested roadway, examining the possible consequences in the region may lead to proposing mitigation strategies beneficial to all affected communities.

The transportation component of the CD Plan will result in an assessment of present conditions followed by an identification of problems.

## STEP 1: Working With Your Regional Planning Agency

The first step in completing a transportation element of the CD Plan is for communities to work with their neighbors and their RPA to discuss transportation issues that may be addressed in the Plan. RPAs will contract with MassHighway for this effort; therefore discussion should focus on the regional benefits a particular transportation solution may have.

To satisfy the transportation element of a CD Plan, communities are required to discuss regional transportation issues, define regional

transportation problems, and develop recommendations to address these problems. For example Southeastern Massachusetts communities could jointly examine the possibilities for transit-oriented design at various railroad stations along the Old Colony Line.

### STEP 2: Examination of Existing Conditions

A community should work with its RPA to examine existing conditions, including a review of roads, bridges, public transit and alternative modes of transportation (e.g. pedestrian, bicycle), and geographically based inventories of roadway drainage systems. This review also includes transportation support systems such as Park and Ride facilities as well as airport, freight, and marine port facilities. RPAs should use the map from the series of buildout maps to review existing development and transportation facilities.

### STEP 3: Problem Identification

The primary focus of the transportation element of the CD Plan is to recommend transportation improvements that may be beneficial to additional housing units, open space and resource protection, or increased economic development. Communities may wish to address current transportation issues or future transportation concerns based upon projected growth, or a combination of these issues.

*See Chapter A for more community-specific data and other sources of information.*

#### Problem Identification within existing infrastructure:

Using data from the map provided in the buildout map series given to each community, RPAs could create a regional or subregional map that identifies transportation infrastructure or services.

#### Problem Identification based upon proposed development:

Whether a community addresses the open space and resource protection, housing and economic development components on an individual community basis or on a regional or subregional basis, it will be necessary for RPAs to review conclusions reached in any of the core areas. To the extent that maps are available, RPAs could view locations of intended new development in order to determine what if any transportation concerns are associated with these locations.

### STEP 4: Recommendations for Improvement

In this step of the process, the RPA or its consultant will develop recommendations based upon the problems identified in Step 3 and the planning process conducted in the other three elements. The recommendations should include improvements that can be implemented within one to five years.

Recommendations will identify the location of transportation improvements on the final GIS map. This will constitute the transportation component of the Community Development Plan.



**Tip:**  
*Existing conditions may have been identified in the Assets and Liabilities Inventory that was developed in the Visioning process.*

#### *Public Involvement*

*As with all core elements of the CD plan, public participation is integral to the transportation section. Because some communities may choose to address the other three core elements on an individual community scale, it is necessary to give all communities involved in the transportation element an opportunity to identify and/or review specific study areas and to comment on the draft and final reports.*





**Tip:**

*As with the individual elements of the Plan, the process of completing the CD Plan Map should be guided by the community's or group of communities' Vision Statement as refined through the Assets and Liabilities Inventory.*



**Tip:**

*If a community uses GIS mapping throughout the planning process to address each of the four core elements, it can easily see the interrelationship among them by overlaying each element. For example, this overlay step will allow the community to see where new development is proposed in relation to important water supply areas.*



**Tip:**

*Completing a buildout analysis based upon a final CD Plan scenario could provide a community with an understanding of what the future community would be like based on the Plan. Useful comparisons could be made to the buildout based on current zoning and development regulations. Communities could also compare the results against their Vision Statement and determine if the result is consistent with enhancing their assets and addressing their liabilities.*

## THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN: PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

### STEP 1: Draft a CD Plan

As a result of completing the four sections above, the community or group of communities should now have data and recommendations for each of the elements of a CD Plan including a:

- Land Use Suitability Study and Map.
- Preliminary Housing Opportunities Study and Map.
- Preliminary Economic Opportunities Study and Map.
- Transportation Study and Map.

The objective of this exercise is to merge these products to develop a single final Community Development Plan including a GIS-based map(s) that weighs the results and recommendations of each of the above products and produces a single consistent CD Plan addressing the location, quantity, and type requirements of Executive Order 418. As stated, this single mapped CD Plan should attempt to be consistent with each of the above study or map recommendations. Inevitably, however, compromise will be necessary to achieve a single consistent plan. The text should explain how inconsistencies were addressed through compromise.

As noted above, the Community Development Plan Program is designed to empower communities to make informed decisions about growth. While the process for developing the plan has been outlined in this guidebook, the outcome is not predetermined. This planning process is an opportunity for communities to make decisions about their own growth, development, and preservation preferences, and to work with neighboring communities to make decisions about interlocal considerations and consequences of growth.

Communities need to ensure they have balanced the plan's elements -- open space and resource protection, housing, economic development and transportation issues -- before adopting the Community Development Plan.

The questions listed in this section are for communities to consider when finalizing their plan to determine how all the elements relate to each other. Ultimately, it is up to the city or town to decide what types of additional development are desired and to site new development in an appropriate location. Below are questions communities may wish to consider as they are finalizing their Plans:

#### Individual Community Development Plan:

- Does the creation of new housing or commercial development involve use of existing buildings, previously developed areas, or restored contaminated areas?

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLANNING: ADDRESSING THE FOUR ELEMENTS

Open Space and Resource Protection, Housing, Economic Development and Transportation

- Does the housing plan address housing needs across a broad range of incomes and propose a variety of housing to respond to identified needs?
- Does the plan provide the land protection needed to sustain the water supply for the intended growth of the community?
- Does the community's plan for future land protection help connect open space parcels to create larger tracts of land for recreation, scenic landscapes or resource protection?
- Does new development require additional municipal services?
- Is the development "in the right place" (e.g., access to infrastructure and services, transit, shopping, etc.)?
- Does the CD Plan match quality of life objectives inherent in the community's Vision Statement?
- Does new development require automobile dependency? Is it/could it be accessible through pedestrian walkways or bike paths?
- Do any identified transportation improvements benefit more than one municipality?
- Are proposed transportation improvements in keeping with the community's vision (i.e. scenic roads, stone bridge v. metal bridge)?
- How will the plan affect other communities in the region and is it consistent with the Regional Policy Plan?

Interlocal plan: In addition to the questions, above:

- Does the plan provide the protection needed to sustain the water supply for all communities that are participants in the plan?
- Does the plan provide for open space acquisition to help connect open space parcels to create larger tracts of land or protect natural resources that may transcend municipal boundaries?
- Has development been sited in the best place taking into consideration municipal services available, access to transportation, etc. regardless of jurisdictional boundary?
- Has housing been provided that considers the housing needs of the region?

### STEP 2: Community Development Plan Implementation

Once the CD Plan for a community or communities is completed, participants should develop a list of actions necessary to implement the plan. These actions will involve such areas as:

- |               |                  |                |
|---------------|------------------|----------------|
| • Zoning      | • Tax Incentives | • Regulation   |
| • Acquisition | • Funding        | • Partnerships |

The types of changes needed will range broadly in subject matter and depth. Multiple solutions will likely be needed to achieve housing creation, open space and resource protection, economic development, and transportation objectives.

